

# Nichi Bei Times



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## Loomis Supports Redress for Fired Railroad Workers

By KENJI G. TAGUMA  
 Nichi Bei Times

LOOMIS, Calif. — In a declaration of support for Japanese Americans fired from railroad or mining jobs after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Loomis Town Council unanimously passed a resolution Aug. 12, backing efforts to extend redress to cover these affected individuals and families.

Children of those fired from American railroad and mines, who claim that the U.S. government is responsible for the terminations and ensuing hardship, have recently begun to organize in an urgent push for redress and reparations under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

The Civil Liberties Act — the culmination of tremendous grassroots efforts and testimony from those sent to American concentration camps — is set to expire on Aug. 10, 1998.

Loomis' resolution, passed with a 5-0 vote and signed by Mayor Gary Gade, supports the efforts to extend the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 to cover claims by the railroad and mining families.

The government stance is that since there is no proof that the U.S. ordered the firings — and that the terminations are assumed by the government to have come at the judgment of the employers alone — the affected families do not fall under any category covered by the redress bill.

The families and their supporters, however, have argued otherwise, and claim that the government is ultimately responsible.

The resolution points out that the railroad and mining families are due redress because they "experienced a denial of liberties and restrictions (including loss of jobs, loss of property, restrictions on travel to a five-mile radius of residence and curfew) that have not been compensated."

It resolved that the two groups "should be found eligible for apology and redress compensation" and that an attached letter be sent to the Department of Justice Appellate Division's David Flynn. The letter will also be forwarded to other Placer County cities with

the request for similar considerations.

### Idea Started in Church

The idea for the Loomis resolution had its beginnings in church. Ida Otani, a Nisei whose father was a foreman for Western Pacific Railroad — only to be fired and ordered to vacate within one day in February of 1942 — made a presentation on her experience to her church's congregation in Loomis earlier this spring.

It wasn't until a couple of months later, however, that the wheels were set in motion for the resolution, to Otani's surprise.

In July, she passed out an information sheet on the railroad workers' plight to her fellow worshippers at First United Methodist Church, which once was a primarily Japanese American congregation. Among the congregation who happened to receive the information prepared by the Japanese American Citizens League was Town Councilwoman Helen Florance, a regular member of the church who apparently pushed for the resolution.

Otani, whose father had six workers under him in Gerlack, Nevada — 140 miles north of Reno — was told of the resolution hearing on the very night it was to be voted upon.

"I was overwhelmed," said Otani. "I thought it was terrific to think that the town of Loomis would do something like this. It's such a contrast with World War II."

Otani, who was attending college in Salt Lake City when the firing occurred, is grateful of the recent support given to Japanese Americans fired by railroad companies.

"I'm glad people are listening to our story," she said. "I just hope it helps our cause."

Patty Wada, the Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific Region Director for the JACL, is encouraged by railroad and mining family members who are actively telling their stories.

"The more people come out about it, the more the public will become educated," said Wada.

## Baseball Ambassadors to be Honored at 3Com Park

Nisei who were instrumental in showcasing American Baseball in Japan will be honored in a special "Bridge Across the Pacific Tribute" on Saturday, August 30 at 3Com Park in San Francisco.

The tribute will be part of a pre-game ceremony at the annual Japanese American Day with the San Francisco Giants, preceding an interleague game with the Anaheim Angels.

Comedian and actor Noriyuki "Pat" Morita — of "Happy Days" and "Karate Kid" fame — will serve as a guest emcee.

Special recognition will be given to the Golden Gate Optimist Club, who have supported youth baseball for 40 years.

Several players and individuals who helped bridge baseball across the Pacific will be honored including:

Cappy Harada — A legendary baseball executive, Harada served under General MacArthur during the postwar occupation of Japan, promoting goodwill through professional baseball tours by American players.

Wally Yonamine — A Nisei pioneer as well as a Japanese baseball legend, Yonamine

played with the San Francisco Seals in 1948 before playing, coaching and managing in the Japanese Baseball League for 26 years. He was voted to the Japan Baseball Hall of Fame in 1994 following an illustrious career.

Fibber Hirayama — A Fresno Nisei, Hirayama played professional baseball in Japan for the Hiroshima Carps.

Kenso "Howard" Zenimura — Another Nisei legend from Fresno, Zenimura was a player for the Hiroshima Carps in 1953.

Kenshi "Harvey" Zenimura — Kenso's brother and fellow son of Issei baseball pioneer Kenichi Zenimura, Kenshi was an all-star player for the Hiroshima Carps from 1953 to 1956.

Ben Mitsuyoshi — Another Pacific bridge-building pioneer that was with the 12th Regt. Griffins Baseball team in Germany in 1952. Mitsuyoshi pitched for the Hiroshima Carps from 1953 to 1954.

Lefty O'Doul — A legend in Japan for his baseball and diplomatic skills that enriched both nations, will be recognized posthumously for helping showcase American baseball in Japan.

### See Inside...

FRIDAY FOCUS: Ambassadors of American Baseball to be Honored... page 3

### Updated Schedule for Japanese American Day with the San Francisco Giants

Saturday, Aug. 30 at 3Com Park  
 Nichi Bei Times Tail Gate Party  
 10:30 a.m. to noon, Parking Lot

10:30 -- Free tailgate lunch for those who purchased tickets through Life Night Times

- Speech by Kerry Yo Nakagawa
- Speech by Jeff Tucker of the San Francisco Giants
- Representative of the Asian American Donor Program, which will conduct a marrow donor drive nearby
- Raffle of Giants jackets, Tamagotchis (11:30 a.m.)
- Information tables
  - Nisei Baseball Research Project to sell T-Shirts
  - Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California to sell videos of the 1996 Japanese American Day with the Giants
  - National Japanese American Historical Society baseball, music exhibit information
- Free copies of past Nichi Bei Times issues
- DISCOUNT SUBSCRIPTIONS to Nichi Bei Times

Note: Although food, raffle and seats are provided...